

DRIVER EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT “WISH LIST”

IN GENERAL

1. One governing body for driver education

- There should be one agency in charge of all driver education activities within the state. The likely agency for this would be DPI with driver education being removed from the DMV. This agency would be responsible for all facets of the program; who can teach, what they teach, oversight of the program, accountability of the program, etc.
- Driver Education should be administered by the State Department of Public Instruction (SDPI). *(Note: This is already established by State law and SDPI needs to take a more active role in the administration of the State Driver Education Program.)*

2. There should be a statewide, mandated driver Education Curriculum

- SDPI should be responsible for the curriculum standards that would be a required part of any curriculum taught in the driver education program.
- Curriculum standards should be required for both the classroom phase and behind-the-wheel phase of driver education.
- There needs to be an approved textbook.

3. Remove restrictions on day time teaching.

- This is an administrative code issue).
- Put driver education back into the school day
- Be put back into the school day as an elective credit.

4. Provide driver education at no cost

- Driver Education should be provided free of charge to all eligible public, private, and licensed home school students

5. Driver Education Required for all “new” drivers

- This would include adults (such as immigrants).

6. Increase student involvement/participation

- Need to find the best avenue to engage the students, make them want to learn and be actively involved in the process.

7. Mandate/increase supervised driving time

- All student driver's would receive no less than 100 hours of supervised driving training prior to receiving their license to drive alone.

8. Explore the use of technologies

- All student driver's vehicles would be equipped with a device that would limit the maximum speed of the vehicle to 60 mph.
- All student driver vehicles would have a breathalyzer device with zero tolerance for alcohol for starting the vehicle.

9. Link driving privileges to student performance

- Driving privileges in High School would be directly linked to both academic performance and general conduct.

10. Proficiency tests

- Discontinue the use of the "proficiency test" in areas where it is still being used.

11. Alternative program format

- A 2-phase driver education program. Presently done only in Michigan to my knowledge

DRIVER EDUCATION CURRICULUM

1. Statewide Curriculum

- All student driver's would be taught from the same curriculum or guidelines.
- Have available textbooks and more related materials in Spanish.
- Have an approved textbook list for the state and mandate that all counties purchase and use textbooks
- Pacing/instructional guides for both phases (classroom and behind the wheel).

2. Increase required classroom hours

- From 30 hours to 45 hours.
- Minimum of 40 hours, with an appropriate increase in funding.
- Set the maximum number of classroom hours taught per day at 2 hours.
- Establish a maximum number of students in a classroom (30 – 35?).

3. Increase required behind-the-wheel hours

- From 6 hours to 8 hours
- Perhaps up to 10-12, with an appropriate increase in funding.
- Possibly utilize additional hours after six months with a learner's permit.
- As one way of increasing time here, possibly swap class room time for behind the wheel time.
- Set the maximum number of behind-the-wheel hours taught per day at 1 hour per student; recommend changing drivers every 30 minutes.
- Establish a maximum number of students per session of behind the wheel instruction (no less than 2 students and no more than 3 students?)

4. Topics to be covered

- One to two hours on highway safety to include specific and consistent messaging on belts, booze, speed, distracted driving.
- Anger management, stress management, time management should be emphasized in the classroom.
- Address other topics as illustrated through analyses of historical crash data.
- Communicate with other ECHS working groups for input into the curriculum.

DRIVER EDUCATION INSTRUCTORS

1. Stricter certification requirements

- Stricter certification and requirements of instructors (more than 80 hr. DMV course, high school graduate with no felonies).
- Commercial schools who contract with school systems would have to be certified by the State Department of Public Instruction with commercial school instructors would have to be approved by SDPI.

2. Accountability procedures

- Audit/Monitoring process with personnel from the state level initiated to assure that funding/procedures are within guidelines for driver ed.
- Driver education instructors would be required to be evaluated a minimum of 2 times a year both classroom and behind-the-wheel.

3. Continuing education for instructors

- Driver education instructors would be required to obtain workshop hours in driver education.

Example: - 64 hours every 4 years with 4 hours credit for each year of teaching.
 - 80 hours every 5 years with 4 hours credit for each year of teaching.

4. Migrate to using only certified instructors with options for non-certified instructors possibly including:

- SDPI would identify courses and or workshops that non-certified teacher would/could take. Required? Could be given a 3-year period to complete. Courses/workshops to be approved by SDPI.
- All driver education instructors to gain certification/accreditation in Driver Education. Required? Could be given a 3-year/5-year period to complete. If required would need to show progress toward completion

OTHER AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Increase Level II of the GDL restriction from 6 months to 12 months to keep extra passengers out of the vehicle.
- Under the GDL program, there needs to be additional penalties for violations including not wearing safety belts other than just extending the Level II phase for an additional six months.
- Need to enforce existing laws in regards to young people and make them administrative where possible to reduce the burden on the courts. For example; if a young person is caught DWI, immediately take their license administratively.

INCREASED PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

- Required viewing/reading material for parents to help stress the importance of their role.
- Provide all parents copies of the Student/Parent Guide that was endorsed by DPI and adopted by the North Carolina Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association.
- Ensure that parents understand they have the final word as to whether their teenager applies for and/or keeps a learner's permit or drivers license.
- Question: Who provides support for those students who have no parental unit?
- Required parent involvement component (orientation meeting/ending conference of student performance, etc.)

PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN IDEAS

- Development and dissemination of educational/informational video/DVD.
- Explanation of graduated drivers licensing and the parents role.
- Stressing the importance, need and reasoning for Driver Education.
- Increase exposure of the importance of safety to younger drivers and the dangers they face.